

MASTERS THESIS

FABERGE'S USE OF ORIENTAL MOTIFS

TIMOTHY BRYAN ADAMS







FABERGÉ'S USE OF ORIENTAL MOTIFS

A Thesis
Presented to the
Faculty of
San Diego State University

In Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Master of Arts
in
Art

by
Timothy Bryan Adams
Fall 1988

THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO

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Carl Faberge 1846-1920

Theo Faberge (GRANDSON)

To Tim, with best wishes for
your success. 1ST DEC 1988.

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CHAPTER I

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

The Fabergé Family

To understand why a French family by the name of Fabergé settled in Russia to make a living as jewelers, one must go back to late seventeenth century France. In 1685 the Edict of Nantes, which provided religious and civil liberty to Protestants, was revoked by Louis XIV. The persecution that followed caused half a million Huguenots to flee France and find refuge in Germany, Switzerland, England, the Netherlands and beyond.

The Fabergé family originally lived in Picardy, Northern France. As Huguenots, the Fabergé family was in danger of persecution unless they fled France. They changed their name to Fabri or Favri before leaving on their 1,200 mile journey through Northern Europe.¹

Their name was changed once again in their first recorded stopping place, Schwedt-on-Oder near Stettin. Their new name was Fabrier. It was not until Carl Fabergé's grandfather Peter became a Russian subject in the Baltic Provinces of Russia that the family reverted to their original name, "Fabergé."²

Peter Fabergé had a son by the name of Gustav who married a girl of Swedish origin named Charlotte Jungstedt. They made their way to St. Petersburg, and there Gustav became an apprentice to the jewelers Spiegel. By 1842 he was able to open his own goldsmith's and jeweler's shop in a basement apartment of a building on Bolshaya Morskaya Street.³ Thus, the House of Fabergé was founded.

On May 30th, 1846, Gustav and Charlotte Fabergé had a son they named Peter Carl; he would go by the name Carl. Gustav sent his son Carl to the Gymnasium Svetaya Anna to be educated there in St. Petersburg. In 1860 Gustav retired and left the firm in the hands of a manager by the name of Zaiontchovsky.⁴ Gustav Fabergé moved to Dresden with his family to enjoy his retirement. There Carl was educated at the Handelschule and was exposed to the work of great goldsmiths on display at the Grünes Gewölbe Museum. Works such as Dinglinger's "At the Court of the Grand Mougat," and Le Roy's "Egg Casket" must have impressed Carl Fabergé; he made a copy of the latter for Czar Alexander III to give to the Czarina on Easter morning 1894.⁵

Gustav Fabergé knew if his son Carl were to become a jeweler like himself, he would have to finish his education as an apprentice to a jeweler. Carl received practical training under a master goldsmith in Frankfurt,

by the name of Friedman. During this apprenticeship he visited many cities such as Rome, Venice, Florence, London and Paris, where ever the art of the finest jewelry thrived.⁶

The years of study in Frankfurt brought the Gothic style to many of Fabergé's pieces. The Saxon gem-carving work as well as Renaissance enamelled jewelry that Carl Fabergé studied on his extensive travels must have been a great inspiration to the young student. The perfection of craftsmanship seen in the work of these goldsmiths of earlier centuries obviously impressed the young Carl Fabergé. It is this same high standard that made the House of Fabergé one of the greatest jewelry houses of all time.

After completing his studies and training, Fabergé returned to St. Petersburg to work with Zaiontchovsky. In 1870, at the age of twenty-four, Fabergé took over control of the family business. His younger brother Agathon, a very talented designer and goldsmith, joined him there in 1882.⁷

In 1872 Carl Fabergé married Augusta Julia Jacobs. In the years to follow they had four sons: Eugène (1874-1960), Agathon (1876-1951), Alexander (1877-1952), and Nicholas (1884-1939), all of whom worked for the firm.⁸ The Fabergé firm, headed by Carl Fabergé, was a dynamic, creative and innovative force. It was this

creative and innovative force that molded the taste of Edwardian Society, creating an era that came to be known as "The Age of Fabergé."

The Fabergé Firm

The Fabergé firm was founded by Gustav Fabergé in 1842, and for twenty eight years it afforded a profitable living for the Fabergé family. It was not until 1870 though, when Carl Fabergé took over his Father's firm, that the House of Fabergé really started to make a name for itself.

The firm was to take a new direction in the years to follow. Fabergé undertook two dramatic departures from tradition. The first was from making objects that were essentially jewelry for adornment to making objects of fantasy for entertainment. The firm's second new emphasis was on the high quality of craftsmanship rather than on the materials used. Thus an elaborately enamelled cigarette case would become as valued as a diamond encrusted brooch. By the turn of the century "objets de fantaisie" from the House of Fabergé would become more desired than the luxury items offered by any of the other great jewelry houses of Europe.

In 1882 the firm moved to larger accommodations at 16 Bolshaya Morskaya Street.⁹ Three years later Czar Alexander III commissioned the first Imperial Easter egg

from the Fabergé firm. This was to be a present to his wife, Empress Marie Feodorovna, a tradition that would continue for the next 32 years. In this same year Count Stroganoff, an art connoisseur and president of the Imperial Archeological Commission, suggested that the Fabergé firm make replicas of pieces found in the Scythian Treasure discovered at Kerch in the Crimea.¹⁰ The original ornaments, dated around 400 B.C., were housed in the Hermitage Museum of the Winter Palace. Fabergé's replicas were exhibited at the Fine Art Exhibition in Nurnberg and won the gold medal. The House of Fabergé exhibited its wares for the first time at the Pan-Russian Exhibition in Moscow in 1882. Fabergé received the gold medal, the first of many.¹¹

It seemed that at every exhibition Fabergé would win "hors concours" without competition. Gold medals and special awards were won at the Nordic Exhibition, Copenhagen 1888, the Pan-Russian Exhibition, Nijny-Novgorod 1896, the Nordic Exhibition, Stockholm 1897, and the "Exposition Internationale Universelle" in Paris in 1900 where Carl Fabergé was acclaimed "Maitre" and decorated with the Legion d'Honneur.¹² This last exhibition, the World Exhibition of 1900, did more than any other event to spread the fame of the House of Fabergé all over the world.

Even before the World Exhibition in Paris, the

desire for Fabergé products was on the rise. In 1887 a branch of the Firm was opened in Moscow; in 1890 the St. Petersburg premises had to be doubled in size and a branch opened in Odessa. Eight years later Fabergé bought a building at 24 Bolshaya Morskaya Street to expand his establishment even further.¹³

This new building, constructed under the direction of Fabergé's nephew, the architect Carl Schmidt, was a fully self-sufficient entity. It was a large building in the Neo-Gothic style of the late 19th century. On the ground floor were the salesrooms where clients could come in and pick out a piece of jewelry or perhaps an "objet de fantaisie" to suit their tastes. Carl Fabergé's own office was on this floor also so he could be close by in case an important client dropped in. On the first floor, above the ground floor, were the Fabergé family apartments and the workshop of the goldsmith, August Hollming. The second floor was assigned to the head workmaster and his workshop: Kollin, Perchin and Wigström each held this position successively. The third floor was that of the head jeweler, August Holmström, and the fourth floor was the workshop of the jeweler, Alfred Thielemann.¹⁴ The firm moved into its new location in 1900, which helped prepare the House of Fabergé for the flood of commissions that would come after their success at the World Exhibition in Paris.

The one and only foreign branch opened was in London in 1903. It became an important source of commissions from Western Europe and America. It was at this branch that the English royal family and their friends did their buying. It was at first run out of an office in Berners Hotel by a Fabergé partner, Arthur Bowe. It was then managed by Carl's son Nicholas Faberge and Henry C. Bainbridge, and its last address was 173 New Bond Street, where most of England's finest jewelry houses are still located.¹⁵ A small branch was opened in Kiev in 1905, but it was closed in 1910 to allow the older, more established Odessa branch to service southern Russia.¹⁶

Of all these branches the Moscow branch was the most important. The large silver workshops were located here, making table silver, centerpieces, cigarette cases and silver items of all sizes. There were also large workshops for the making of jewelry and objects of fantasy. The style of objects made in Moscow, however, were for a different clientele than those made in St. Petersburg. Moscow's high society belonged to a nouveau riche class of the bourgeoisie. These wealthy merchants and industrialists had strong traditional tastes, and the Moscow workshops were geared to producing silverware and cloisonne enamel in a pan-Slavic style (based on the medieval period in Russia) as well as a certain amount of art-nouveau pieces that had become very fashionable. St.

Petersburg, on the other hand, was the seat of the Imperial Court. Nobility from all over the world gathered in St. Petersburg to be a part of this beautiful cosmopolitan city. Thus, it was to the western-influenced aristocracy that Fabergé's St. Petersburg workshops catered. The international court-style which Fabergé here created achieved an elegance and refinement in transparent guilloché enamels that was not found in the heavier cloisonné type of the Moscow branch. It was this heavy, national, traditionalistic style, that kept the Moscow branch's clientele limited to the Moscow region.¹⁷

In 1915 the London branch was closed due to World War I. In 1917, with the outbreak of the Russian Revolution, the Firm was taken over by a "Committee of the Employees of the Company K. Fabergé," and in 1918 the House of Fabergé was closed forever.¹⁸

CHAPTER II

ARTISTS AND MASTER CRAFTSMEN OF THE HOUSE OF FABERGÉ

Creating an Art Form

The House of Fabergé enjoyed such success because of the unlimited resources of Carl Fabergé's imagination and the skill of over 500 artists and craftsmen that worked under him.¹⁹

Fabergé's idea of combining embellished objets d'art (small objects of artistic value) and functional objects to create what he called "objets de fantaisie," could not have been more timely. The taste of society was changing in the mid 1880's, largely due to the inspiration of Carl Fabergé. The first Imperial Easter Egg was made around 1885 and given to Czarina Maria Feodorovna by Czar Alexander III. In this way the custom of giving Fabergé objets de fantaisie began. The idea was so successful that commissions for objets de fantaisie poured into the House of Fabergé.²⁰

Applied arts ceased functioning simply as ostentatious evidence of wealth and prosperity. They became more "refined" they became "fine art." The combination of tiny rose diamonds and semiprecious

stones, for example, unprecedented color combinations in enamels and multi-colored gold fashioned with workmanship of the highest precision, gave Fabergé objects a refinement no one could surpass. Fabergé sought to meet the demands of this society by creating a variety of useful objects such as cigarette cases, vanity cases, notebooks, perfume flasks, bonbonnières, writing equipment, umbrella handles, and bell pushes. These gave the owner a certain elegance of style.

The design process for most pieces began with Fabergé, originally (1862-1895) in collaboration with his brother Agathon. An extensive reference library was always available to the designers and workmasters. It included books on the latest techniques in goldsmithing, enamelling, and stone setting, as well as a collection of mounted animals used as models for Fabergé's small hardstone animals.²¹ Fabergé provided as much as possible for his artists, not only materials such as gold, silver, and the finest gems, but also sources of inspiration.

Francis Birbaum was Fabergé's chief designer. He was Swiss and has been universally acclaimed as a "brilliant graphic artist."²² According to H. C. Bainbridge, who ran the London branch, "nobody had a bigger say in deciding the eventual shape and colouring of Fabergé objects than he."²³ Getting Fabergé's ideas

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down on paper was his responsibility. Birbaum and other designers were responsible for producing detailed drawings of the objects to be made as well as planning the stages of manufacture.

Fabergé's designs stem from a strong art-historical interest. His education and extensive travels to Western Europe and Asia exposed him to art styles of the past, new trends in art and the art of foreign cultures.²⁴ His styles range from the Renaissance to Baroque and Rococo, to Art Nouveau and Art Deco. His fascination with oriental art can be seen in pieces he made in the oriental tradition as well as objects incorporating "antique Chinese snuff bottles or carved Indian jades, which were given Fabergé mounts."²⁵ This oriental influence will be explored in more depth later on. It was this cosmopolitan type of design as well as uniqueness of object and quality of craftsmanship that was to make Fabergé so successful.

Workmasters

Once a design was conceived and detailed drawings were made, it was submitted to the head workmaster who in turn would decide to which workshops the piece should be assigned for the different stages of manufacturing. If, for some technical reason, a design had to be altered, the head workmaster had the authority to do so.²⁶ If a

major commission was being done, the piece would be submitted to Fabergé himself after each stage of the work process. All pieces when completed would be submitted to Fabergé for final approval. If a piece passed it received his signature stamp, if not, it was destroyed or sold without his signature.²⁷

It was the workmasters and their workshops that actually created these pieces we call Fabergé. Some of the finest craftsmen in Europe worked for Fabergé, each specializing in a certain medium or style and each having a character of his own which was recognizable in the work he produced.

The following is a list of workmasters who worked for Fabergé. The biographies were assembled listing what little information is known about them. They are based on Alexander von Solodkoff's book Masterpieces from the House of Fabergé.²⁸ Square brackets indicate where I have added additional information.

Johan Victor Aarne (1863-1934), born in Finland, Fabergé workmaster from 1891-1904. After selling his workshop to Hjalmar Armfeldt in 1904, he opened his own workshop in Viipuri, Finland. [He specialized in] gold and silver articles that were often enameled.

Fedor Afanassiav, [born in Russia,] made small articles of high quality in enamel: miniature

Easter eggs, small frames, cigarette cases, [objets de fantaisie].

Karl Gustav Hjalmar Armfeldt (1873-1959) born in [Hango,] Finland, workmaster under Anders Nevalainen from 1895 until 1904. Studied at the German art school at St. Petersburg 1887-89 and at Baron Stieglitz's school for applied arts 1889-1904. In 1904 he bought the workshops of Victor Aarne [and Nevalainen]. He mainly produced enameled objects for Faberge until 1916. Armfeldt emigrated to Finland, where he worked from 1920 on.

Andre Gorianov, [born in Russia,] took over from Reimer after his death in 1898. He specialized in small gold and enamel objects and cigarette cases.

August Fredrik Hollming (1854-1913), born in [Loppis,] Finland, workmaster in St. Petersburg from 1880 until his death, with a workshop at 35 Kazanskaya Street, in 1900 he moved into Fabergé's new building. For Fabergé he produced gold and silver boxes and ornaments, some of them enameled. Occasionally small enameled jewelry. His son August Valno Hollming (1885-1934), ran his father's workshop from 1913 until 1918.

August Wilhelm Holmström (1829-1903), born in Helsenki, Finland, was workmaster in 1857 with his

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own workshop. Senior member of Fabergé's firm; he was head jeweler and is recorded as the maker of the 1892 Diamond Trellis Egg. His son Albert Woldemar Holmström (1876-1925) took over the workshops at his father's death in 1903 and worked until 1918, then later in Finland. [August's daughter] Hilma Alina, worked as a jewelry designer for Fabergé.

Erik August Kollin (1836-1901), born in [Pujo,] Finland, qualified as workmaster in 1868, in 1870 opened his own workshop in St. Petersburg at 9 Kazanskaya Street. Kollin worked exclusively for Fabergé and was soon put in charge of all Fabergé workshops, a post held until 1886 when he was replaced by Michael Perchin. He specialized in gold and silver articles. The replicas of the Sythian treasure were made by his workshop. [The first Imperial Easter Egg was probably done by Kollin.]

Karl Gustav Johansson Lundell (1833-?), [born in Sweden,] is not recorded as a qualified master, but worked for Fabergé's Odessa branch.

Anders Michelsson (1839-1913), born in [Pytis,] Finland, was master goldsmith and jeweler by 1867. He mainly produced gold cigarette cases and small enamelled objects.

Anders Johan Nevalainen (1858-1933), born in Finland, became master in 1885. He worked

exclusively for Fabergé, first in August Holmström's workshop then independently in his own. He made small articles in gold and silver, including enamelled frames and cigarette cases.

Gabriel Zachariasson Niukkanen, [born in Finland,] was master between 1898 and 1912 with his own workshop in St. Petersburg at 39 Kazanskaya Street. He made plain gold cigarette cases, which only on occasion bore Fabergé's signature.

Michael Evlampievich Perchin (1860-1903), born in Petrozavodsk, Eastern Karelia, died in St. Petersburg. Perchin, Fabergé's legendary workmaster, was head of the workshops from 1886 until his death. His workshop was at 11 Bolshaya Morshaya Street until 1900 when he moved to Fabergé's new building at number 24. His workshop produced all types of objets de fantaisie in gold, enamel, and hardstones. He was responsible for the Imperial Easter Eggs made between 1886 and 1903. [Perchin had much baroque and rocco in his style, most of his pieces contained rocaille elements.]

Knut Oskar Pihl (1860-1897), born in [Pojo,] Finland, workmaster in 1887, manufactured small jewelry pieces. [He also headed the jewelry shop in Moscow.] Pihl's daughter Alma Teresia Pihl (1888-1976) started as a jewelry designer in the

workshop of her uncle Albert Holmström. She made the designs of the 1913 Winter Egg and the 1914 Mosaic Egg.

Julius Alexandrovich Rappoport (1864-1916), [born in Germany], had his own workshop at Ekatarininski Canal from 1883 where he remained when Faberge moved his staff to the house in Bolshaya Morshaya Street. Rappoport was head silversmith and produced large objects and services as well as silver animals. [He preferred the Louis XVI style.]

Wilhelm Reimer (died c. 1898), born in Pernau, Lettland, made small enamel and gold objects.

Philip Theodor Ringe had his own workshop from 1893 on, where he made objects in enameled gold or silver.

Fedor Rückert, born in Moscow, of German origin, made articles in Moscow in cloisonne enamel. Fabergé's Moscow signature often obliterates Rückert's initials. Rückert also sold his cloisonne objects independently, which explains why a number of pieces bear no Fabergé signature. [He was the only cloisonne enamel workmaster.]

Eduard Wilhelm Schramm, born in St. Petersburg, of German origin, worked for Fabergé before 1899 making cigarette cases and gold objects; in most instances he signed only with his own initials.

Vladimir Soloviev, took over Ringe's workshop after his death, and made similar objects. His initials can often be found under the enamel on pieces made for export to England.

Alfred Thielemann (date of birth unknown, died between 1890 and 1910), of German origin, master from 1858 and active as jeweler for Fabergé from 1880. Thielemann produced trinkets and small pieces of jewelry; his place was taken after his death by his son, Karl Rudolph Thielemann.

Stefan Wäkevä (1833-1910), born in [Sackjarri] Finland, master in 1856. He made silver articles for practical use.

His son, Alexander Wäkevä (1870-1957), was trained as a silversmith with his father and took over the workshop in 1910.

Henrik Immanuel Wigström (1862-1923), born in Taminisaari, Finland. In 1884 he obtained a post as journeyman with Michael Perchin. After Perchin's death in 1903, Wigström became head workmaster of Fabergé until 1917. Under his direction, the Imperial Easter Eggs were made from 1904 to 1917. Nearly all hardstone animals, figurines, and flowers were produced under his supervision. [His style usually features elements of Louis XVI and Empire Styles with extensive use of acanthus and laurel

leaf bands in his late period.]

The painters of the miniatures that appear on Fabergé objects include:

A. Blaznov. No biographical details known. Painted mainly portraits of Nicholas II during the 1890s. The signature is usually in Cyrillic.

Konstatin Krijitski (Krizhitsky). Painted miniatures for the 1891 Caucaus Egg and for the 1895 Danish Palace Egg. The latter are on mother-of-pearl.

Prachov. No biographical details known. Painted the icon of the Resurrection of Christ for the 1915 Red Cross Egg.

Johannes Zehngraf. Born 1857 in Copenhagen, died 1908 in Berlin. Chief miniature painter for Fabergé. Painted portraits of the Imperial Family, the King and Queen of Denmark, King Ferdinand I of Bulgaria. Three Imperial Easter Eggs are decorated with his miniatures, including the 1898 Lilies of the Valley Egg.

Vasily Zviev. Active from about 1908 to 1917, possibly succeeding Zehngraf as chief miniaturist. Remained in Russia after the Revolution. A brilliant artist, he painted not only on ivory but also on enamel. Major examples of his work are the miniatures on ivory of the 1911 Fifteenth

Anniversary Egg and the grisaille enamel panels of the 1914 Grisaille Egg (now called the Catherine the Great Egg).²⁹

Without these artists and master craftsmen the vision of Fabergé would have never materialized. Each one played an important role in the creative process of this new cosmopolitan art form known as "objets de fantaisie." They were as independent of one another as stars on their own courses, yet worked together to create a galaxy moving around a center of gravity that gave them life and held them in their orbit. Carl Fabergé was the sun at the center of this great galaxy at the House of Fabergé. He was the creative strength, the life giving energy that held this creative force together. He gave it direction, and with a strong yet gentle hand he expanded its boundaries with his limitless imagination.

CHAPTER III

FABERGE IN SIAM

Diplomatic Relations at the Turn of the Century

During the reign of King Chulalongkorn (Rama V), 1868-1910, Siam passed through perhaps the most perilous period of its exposure to European imperialism. The Kingdom found itself sandwiched between Great Britain, whose influence extended to Burma and Malaya to the West and South of Siam, and France, which held sway over Indo-China to the East.

King Chulalongkorn realized that to survive the Kingdom needed a more efficient government, greater control over outlying regions, and larger revenues. He therefore began to launch various reform programs. These included the re-organization of the central and provincial governments along Western lines, the introduction of universal, and ultimately compulsory, primary education, and the introduction of public work programs, especially in the field of communications (namely, telegraph, telephone, and railway). Due to the fact the King initiated legal and judicial reforms along Western lines, Western powers ultimately let Siam revise

THE INDIAN BUREAU AT THE END OF THE CENTURY

During the reign of King Christian IV, the Indian Bureau was established in 1616, and it was the first of its kind in the world. It was a bureau of the Danish government, and it was the first of its kind in the world. It was a bureau of the Danish government, and it was the first of its kind in the world. It was a bureau of the Danish government, and it was the first of its kind in the world.

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her unequal treaties with them during the reign of King Vajiravudh (Rama VI). Siam was thereby given an ultimate judicial sovereignty not only over its own subjects but also over foreign nationals.³⁰

In addition to this foreign policy conducted by the King in order to maintain the country's independence, King Chulalongkorn strongly believed that the country's position in the international arena would be strengthened if he were to develop strong personal ties with all the rulers of Europe, from St. Petersburg to London and from Stockholm to Rome.

On his first tour of 1897 the King travelled the whole way to Europe and back in the ship, "Maka Chak." It was an extremely successful trip as the King could converse easily and intimately with European royalty, being the first Asian monarch to talk to them directly in English instead of through interpreters. Among the many countries he visited was France where he was agreeably surprised to find that he was well received both officially and by the French people who cheered when he appeared with the President of the Republic in a horse-drawn carriage after being met at the railway station.³¹ In Germany he got on well with Kaiser Wilhelm II. In London he stayed at Buckingham Palace and was received by the Prince of Wales (later Edward VII), as Queen Victoria was resting at Windsor in preparation for her forthcoming

Diamond Jubilee. In Austria he stayed with the Emperor Franz-Joseph at both the Hofburg and Schoenbrunn. He also visited Italy, Sweden, Belgium and other countries.³²

The King was particularly friendly with the Royal Family of Denmark. There had been much trade between Siam and Denmark through the Danish East Asiatic Company, which had imported teak from the forest in the north as well as engaging in other trades. In Denmark junior princes went into business and one of these was Prince Waldemar, the youngest son of King Christian IX and brother of both Queen Alexandra of England and the Empress Maria Feodorovna of Russia. Prince Waldemar had, for business reasons, visited Siam many times and had become a close personal friend of King Chulalongkorn. He spread the news over the courts of Europe of the noble qualities of his Siamese royal friend, and soon European royalty began to visit Bangkok.³³

King Chulalongkorn and Czar Nicholas II

In 1890, an important visitor came in the person of Prince Waldemar's nephew, Nicholas II of Russia, then Czarevitch or Heir Apparent, who stopped by in Bangkok while on a trip to lay the foundation block for the Trans-Siberia Railway.³⁴

On March 19, 1890, the Czarevitch's boat arrived at

the mouth of the Chao Phraya River and was met by several high ranking Siamese princes. The next day Nicholas II was granted an audience with His Majesty the King. The Royal guest stayed in Bangkok for two days and then the King took him to the Bang Pa-In Summer Palace for another three days. The two took a liking to each other and soon became fast and lifelong friends.³⁵

On July 3, 1897, on a reciprocal visit, King Chulalongkorn arrived in Russia. By then his old friend had ascended the throne and become Czar Nicholas II. King Chulalongkorn stayed in St. Petersburg for four days. On July 7, he boarded the train for Moscow, where he stayed for three days. He then returned to St. Petersburg for another day before leaving Russia on July 11 to continue on to Sweden.³⁶

The King was deeply impressed by the reception given him by the Czar and members of the Russian Royal Family. Throughout the trip he wrote letters (which have since been published in book form) to Queen Saowabha Phongsri who had been appointed Regent during his absence. In these letters the King related how kindly he was treated by the Czar as one of the family, how often he was left alone to be with his friend to talk about various matters of mutual interests, and how much he enjoyed the Czar's company. He also mentioned how much he appreciated the cigarette case that was presented to him

signed "From Your Friend Nicholas, 1897, Peterhof," which came from the jeweler Fabergé. In fact, we know that the King made a personal visit to the Fabergé Store in Moscow on July 8, 1897.³⁷

It was probably during one of these private conversations between the two rulers that the Czar asked King Chulalongkorn to send one of his sons to Russia to be brought up by him, as a token of their friendship. The King had already sent many of his sons to be educated in Europe. For example, the Crown Prince Maha Vajiravudh (later Rama VI) received his entire education in England, first with a private tutor, then at Christ Church, Oxford University, where he studied history. He subsequently entered the Royal Military College at Sandhurst and, after being commissioned, was attached to the Durham Light Infantry. Another of the King's sons, Prince Paripatra, was educated in Germany under the guiding hands of the Kaiser Wilhelm II, and he also distinguished himself in the German Army.³⁸ The Czar wanted to bring up one of the King's sons, to guide his education, and to have the young prince live permanently in an apartment in the Winter Palace, in St. Petersburg.

King Chulalongkorn accepted the offer and chose Prince Chakragbongse, the second son of Queen Saowabha Phongsri, who then began to learn Russian as well as English.

King Chulalongkorn laid the foundation that helped prepare Siam for the twentieth century by modernizing the country but still retaining its's historical culture. It was his successor, Prince Maha Vajiravudh (Rama VI), who built upon this foundation and successfully blended the Western concept of a nation state, the Buddhist religion, and the Siamese monarchy into the true pillars on which this society rests to this day. They are namely, nation, religion, and monarchy.

During the long years of association between King Chulalongkorn and Czar Nicholas II, many Fabergé objects were certainly received as gifts, as the firm had, since 1884, been appointed jeweller to the Imperial Court. Many items were even commissioned by the King and other members of the Siamese Royal Family so that the Royal Family became the only non-European Royal House to have extensive numbers of Fabergé objects in their collections.

Fabergé Commissions

With Prince Chakrabongse living in the Winter Palace of the Czar in St. Petersburg it was only natural that royal commissions would be given to the court jeweler. The Siamese royal family purchased large quantities of Fabergé articles: picture frames, perfume bottles, brooches, ink wells, cuff links, candle sticks, bowls and

boxes. The collection became the largest of its kind in Asia.

King Chulalongkorn's visit to the Fabergé showrooms on July 8, 1897 was recorded by one of his entourage.³⁹ The contact between the House of Fabergé and the royal family of Siam was strengthened even further when Carl Fabergé's son, Nicholas, who travelled on behalf of the Firm, made a trip to Bangkok. Nicholas Fabergé was granted an audience with the King on November 27, 1908.⁴⁰ It was personal contact with the important clients that allowed Fabergé to make articles to their specific tastes.

With his art historical background, Fabergé was able to create pieces that became especially meaningful to his Asian client. These items included Siamese art motifs with Buddhist and Hindu iconography.

"Objets de memoire"

Portraits of family members who have died served as reminders to those who wore them. Beautiful brooches containing painted portraits of members of the royal family who had passed away were fashioned by Fabergé for the royal collection. Four of them make use of Siamese symbols and iconography. The Crown Prince Maha Vajirunhis brooch (Fig. 1) contains a monochrome sepia portrait painted on enamel of the Crown Prince who passed

home. The collection became the largest of its kind in
the world.

King Christian IX's visit to the Danish Museum
in 1897 was recorded by one of his entourage.

The conflict between the House of Holsten and the royal
family of Denmark was strengthened even further when Carl
Johann's son, Nicholas, who travelled on behalf of the
king, made a trip to Denmark. Nicholas' journey was

granted an audience with the king on November 24, 1890.
It was personal contact with the important officials in
the Danish Museum, as well as visits to their special
collections.

With his art historical background, Johann's visit
to the Danish Museum was especially meaningful to him.
There is even evidence of his visit
with his son and his family.

"Globe of the World"

Portraits of family members who have died are
exhibited in the museum. Beautifully
arranged painted portraits of members of the royal
family who had passed away were exhibited in the
the royal collection. Four of these were of Danish
royals and their families. The other three were
Victorian royal family. It contains a number of
portraits painted in honor of the Danish royal family.



Fig. 1. Fabergé Crown Prince Maha Vajirunhis Brooch



away at the age of seventeen. He was the first heir to King Chulalongkorn (Rama V). The frame is bordered with a flame pattern, a motif that is prevalent in Siamese art. The flames are delicately made with diamonds above a border of calibrated sapphires. Fabergé then uses the Siamese dynastic symbols, the Chakra, a discus-like weapon, and the Kri, a three-pronged dagger, to crown the brooch. The Chakra and Kri are made of small rose-cut diamonds and rubies. This delicate work was executed by the master jeweler August Holmström.⁴¹

Another one of King Chulalongkorn's sons passed away in his teens, Prince Somudhivong Varotai. His memorial brooch (Fig. 2) is made of 18K gold with green and red enamel, and the portrait is painted in monochrome sepia on a soft pink enamel background. Fabergé has used a Hindu symbol in this brooch, the Kirthi Mukha, or the "Face of Glory," a device that is used to repel evil. The Kirthi Mukha is believed to be a manifestation of the god Shiva whose function is to protect devotees. This frame using the Kirthi Mukha is supposed to protect the young Prince in the after-life.⁴²

It is easier to see the Kirthi Mukha face in the brooch of Princess Sirabhorn Sophon, (Fig. 3), daughter of King Chulalongkorn. The face, made of 18K gold and multi-color enamel, is quite typical of a mask one would see depicting a Hindu diety with its broad mouth, pointed



Fig. 2. Fabergé Prince Somudhivong Varotai Brooch

11th St. George's House, Richmond, Va. 12-1911



Fig. 3. Fabergé Princess Sirbhorn Sophon Brooch



ears and eyebrows and large teeth. As Princess Sirabhorn Sophon died very young, she is still wearing a top-knot in the portrait.⁴³

The last brooch, (Fig. 4) also the work of August Holmström, pictures Princess Sirabhorn Sephon, Crown Prince Maha Vajirunhis and Prince Sommudhirong Varotai, all children of King Chulalongkorn and Queen Sawang Watana.⁴⁴ Here Fabergé has used a ruby border with the elaborate flame design that seem spontaneous at first glance but it is quite symmetrical if examined closely.

"Objets d'art religieux"

The King of Siam and his family commissioned several pieces from the House of Fabergé to be used for religious and ceremonial purposes. A lustral-water bowl carved from one piece of nephrite into the shape of a Buddhist monk's alms bowl (Fig. 5) is used in the Chapel of Emerald Buddha to hold holy water for administering the oath of allegiance to high court officials. This bowl is 25 centimeters in diameter and weighs over twenty pounds.⁴⁵ It is supported by the avatars of three Hindu gods: a wild gander (hamsa), which is the symbol of Brahma the creator of the world; a bull (nandi), which is a vehicle of Shiva, the creator, sustainer and destroyer of the world; and a garuda, a half-bird half-man being, which is the emblem of Vishnu, the protector and savior



Fig. 4. Fabergé Princes and Princess Brooch





Fig. 5. Fabergé Nephrite Lustral-Water Bowl



of the world. These three mythical creatures are made of solid gold and elaborately decorated with diamonds, rubies and emeralds. It is believed that King Vajiravudh (Rama VI) commissioned this piece and personally supplied the gold.

Fabergé has successfully combined in one piece the simplicity of the Buddhist faith, as seen in the alms bowl, with the elaborate representation of three Hindu deities in gold and jewels. This is a juxtaposition of style that only a master craftsman and designer could create.

King Vajiravudh is believed to have commissioned what is most likely the largest stone carved figure Fabergé ever made, a nephrite Buddha that is 37.5 centimeters high (Fig. 6). It is kept in the Temple of the Emerald Buddha in Bangkok. This piece is the only one of its kind and is used for the King's personal worship.

Fabergé has made this Buddha using elements of the northern Siamese style of the Chiengsen period. The image sits in the lotus pose, with the legs crossed and both soles of the feet facing upward, a feature found also at Sarnath, Mathura, Gandhara, and in the caves of western India.⁴⁶ The unsisa (or ushnisha), the protuberance on the skull, is covered with small curls of hair and ends in a full lotus-bud, a symbol of wisdom.⁴⁷ Similar Buddhas from Northern Siam, (Figs. 7 and 8) show

the gold and silver...
the gold and silver...
the gold and silver...
the gold and silver...

the gold and silver...
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the gold and silver...



Fig. 6. Fabergé Nephrite Buddha Calling the Earth to Witness





Fig. 7. Early Chiengsaen Bronze Buddha



Fig. 8. Bronze Buddha from North Siam



this same style from the Chiengsen period. The unsisa is formed the same way; and the lotus pose of the feet with the soles upward is apparent. The long earlobes, seen in all three Buddhas, records Buddha's renunciation of his position as a prince by removing his jewels including his heavy earrings that lengthened his earlobes.⁴⁸ Fabergé used an expanded and stylized lotus-flower throne on which to seat his Buddha. The lotus is a sign of Buddha's godhood.⁴⁹ This stylized throne, which can also be seen under the bronze Buddha of the 11th or 12th century (Fig. 8), comes from the Pala style in Bengal. Another iconographical tool that Fabergé uses is the bhumisparsa mudra. Mudras are hand gestures with specific meanings in a prescribed and carefully organized system. The bhumisparsa mudra, or "touching of the earth" gesture, with the right hand hanging over the crossed legs, the back of the hand being turned to the front and the fingers extended, symbolizes Buddha calling the earth to witness the defeat of Mara, the deity of sin incarnate, and to bear witness to Buddha achieving Enlightenment.⁵⁰

This style of Buddha is one of the earliest forms of Siamese Buddha images.⁵¹ With the formula of the body style, crossed lotus pose legs, throne and use of the unsisa, the Siamese artist has created a unique Buddha. Fabergé used this traditional style of the 11th and 12th

centuries to create his great nephrite Buddha.

There is of course a major difference between Fabergé's Buddha and the two from the Chiengsen period, and that is the Buddha's attire. The first thing that is noticeable about the Fabergé Buddha is the use of gold chains with flowers made of precious stones and enamel. This practice of adorning images with jewelry shows the influence of the Hindu religion. The royal attire of Hindu divinities includes a "diadem and large quantities of jewelry such as earrings, armlets, bracelets, finger rings, and anklets".⁵² In accordance with a custom originating in India, the pious might present the statue of a Hindu god with real ornaments of this sort which could be changed at will. The Buddhists adapted the practice and extended it to images which were already wearing the monastery dress.

The second difference in attire is the use of a heavy folded robe. During the reign of King Rama V artists in Siam tried to humanize the Buddha image as much as possible by trying to follow the Gandhara school of Buddha imagery in India. An example of this kind of image, cast in the reign of King Rama V (Fig. 9), features wave-line hair and wavy folded robe over the whole body. These are typical stylistic motifs of the Gandhara school of sculpture. In the Nephrite Buddha one can see a traditional Siamese Buddha image, with turn of



Fig. 9. 19th Century Siamese Bronze Buddha in Gandharan Style



the century attire, created by Fabergé a Russian jeweler. Fabergé has combined the traditional Siamese religious iconography with contemporary religious iconography to create a piece of art that is unique.

Three other Buddhas were made by Fabergé's head workmaster, Henrik Wigstrom, for the Royal Collection. These Buddhas are 9.0 centimeters high and sit on thrones of gold and enamel, (Figs. 10 and 11). One Buddha (Fig. 10) is believed to have been commissioned by Prince Chakrabongse while he was studying in Russia to be presented to his brother Prince Mahidal who is the father of the present King, Bhumibol Adulyade (Rama IX).⁵³ This Buddha has a throne made of stylized lotus petals in white, green and red enamel on 18K gold, bordered in small round cabochon emeralds. The Buddha is carved of nephrite with a flame-shaped finial made of gold and red enamel. The flame, a symbol of enlightenment and Buddha's godhood, is a stylistic convention used in the Sukodaya (or Suk'ot'ai) period (1250-1378 AD).⁵⁴ The flame has replaced the ushnisha of the Chiengsen period. The other two Buddhas (Fig. 11) have the same flame style aureole but carved in nephrite.

These three images also have the more sheer and stylized robe of the Sukhodaya period as seen in a bronze buddha from that period (Fig. 12). This bronze piece is in the posture of "meditation," both hands are in the



Fig. 10. Fabergé Nephrite Buddha in Meditation Posture





Fig. 11. Fabergé Nephrite Buddhas in Meditation Posture



Fig. 12. Sukhodaya Period Bronze Buddha



lap, one on top of the other with the palms upward. Fabergé has used this mudra for his Buddhas as well, but he retains the lotus pose of the Chiengsen period with the soles of the feet on the same level. One Buddha (Fig. 10) remains in the Tai Royal Collection, but the other two have been sold to a private collector.

The most venerated religious structure for the Buddhist is the Stupa. It was originally created to enshrine relics of Buddha. As time went on it was used to hold relics of some holy men and kings. Eventually it became a religious symbol of Buddhism. The Great Stupa (Fig. 13) at Sanchi (3rd century B.C.-1st century A.D.) was an early prototype of the Buddhist stupa which originated in Central India. The architectural features of an Indian Buddhist stupa consist of a circular basement or drum. Then on that drum rises a massive, hemispherical dome or tumulus. On the crown of the dome is a square stone railing. From this there rises a short mast supporting three flattened circular umbrellas.⁵⁵ The dome represents the universe, the railing the four corners of the world, the mast the center of the universe. The umbrellas are symbols of royalty.

Stupa architecture, arriving in Ceylon, became more bubble-shaped than hemispherical (Fig. 14). The balustrade or railing of the Indian stupa became a square plinth and the mast with three umbrellas became a series



Fig. 13. The Great Stupa, Sanchi, India





Fig. 14. The Thuparama Dagoba Anuradhapura, Ceylon



Fig. 15. The Chedi of Wat Pra Sri-Sanpet, Siam



of seven umbrellas telescoped together.

The stupa in Siam is known as a Pra Chedi or simply Chedi. This structure retained much of the same characteristics of its predecessors in India and Ceylon, but a few changes were made. The dome became bell shaped and the mast became a slender tapering spire (Figs. 15 and 16). A dewdrop is also added to the top of the spire.⁵⁶

This form of stupa developed in Siam created a unique Buddhist monument. The Chedi form was also used to make reliquaries as seen in an 18th century (Fig. 17) example made of brass.

Fabergé has used this traditional Chedi form and created a reliquary made of nephrite, gold, rose diamonds, red jade and a pearl (Fig. 18). Comparing this reliquary with the Phra Pathom Chedi (Fig. 16) and the Chedi of Wat Pra Sri-Sanpet (Fig. 15), one can see just how accurate in detail the Fabergé reliquary is. He has used the bell-shaped dome, and at the neck of the bell there is a small square plinth with colonnade above it. Above the colonnade is a slender tapering spire consisting of circles diminishing in diameter, superimposed one upon the other. At the culminating point of the spire is the "pli" or plantain bud, and above this point is another round ball, called Yad Nam Khang or the dewdrop.



Fig. 16. Phra Pathom Chedi, Nakhon Province, Siam



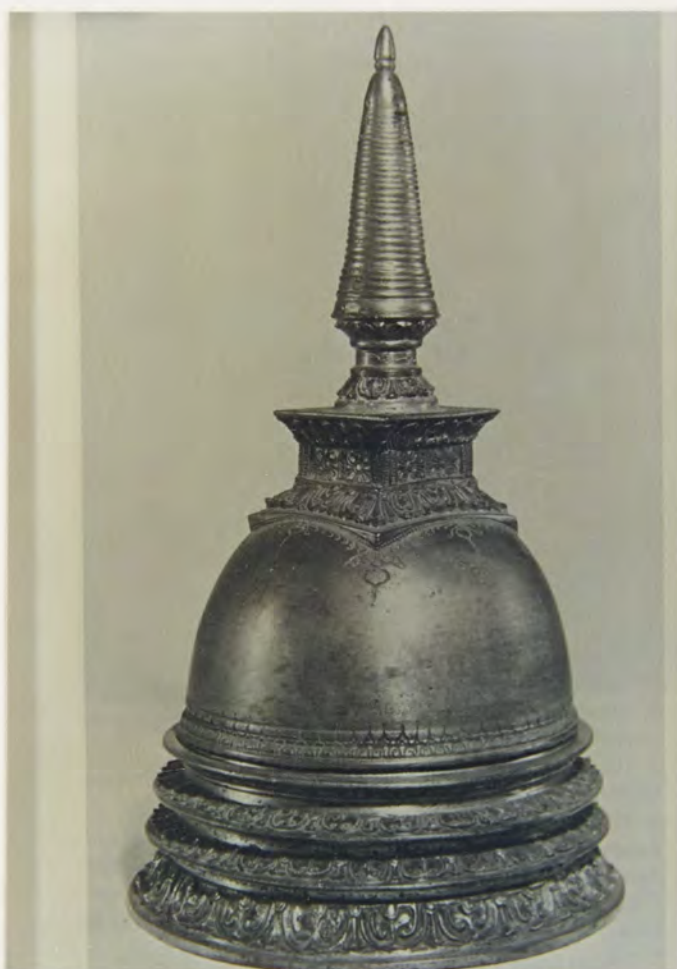


Fig. 17. 18th Century Brass Chedi Reliquary





Fig. 18. Fabergé Nephrite Chedi Reliquary



This attention to detail gives the Fabergé Chedi integrity. At the same time the piece keeps the Fabergé signature of elegant refinement, evident in the use of a pearl for the crowning dewdrop.

"Objets de luxe"

Fabergé created several pieces for the royal family to use in their secular life as well. One was the Temple of Dawn box made of nephrite, gold, and enamel (Fig. 19). The lid of the box has a painting of the temple in monochrome sepia over a delicate enameled sunburst pattern. The sides are carved with lotus petal motifs and the box rests on four tiny 18-carat gold elephants. The elephant is the heraldic emblem of the royal family.

The elephant heraldic motif is used once again by Fabergé in two cigarette cases that he has created for them. The first is in nephrite (Fig. 20) carved in bas-relief, the elephant's eye is a diamond and a ruby is used for the thumb push. The second cigarette case is made of silver and consists of two elephants facing in opposite directions (Fig. 21). Their eyes are cabochon rubies. The case is done in the Art Nouveau style. Here Fabergé has masterfully combined a contemporary Western European aesthetic with a traditional heraldic emblem of Siam.

Fabergé also created a beautiful nephrite urn-shaped



Fig. 19. Fabergé Temple of Dawn Nephrite Box

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Fig. 20. Fabergé Nephrite Elephant Cigarette Case

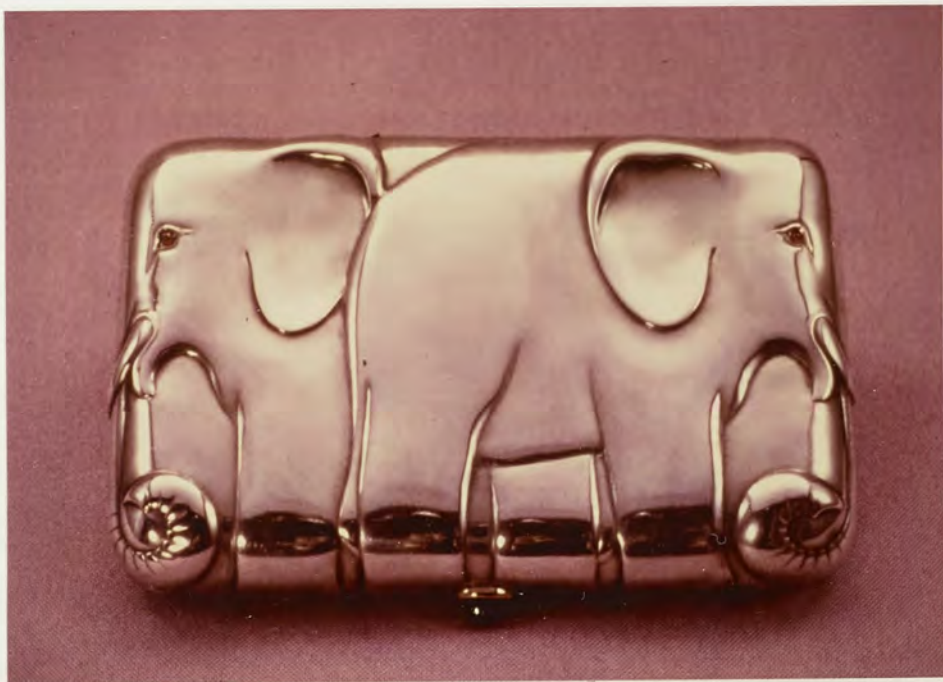


Fig. 21. Fabergé Silver Elephant Cigarette Case



vase (Fig. 22), elaborately decorated in white enamel. Once again, he uses cabochon rubies to accent the green nephrite. The handles are in the shape of mythical birds, and Fabergé uses the Siamese flame motif to create a crest for their heads.

In his book on Fabergé, H.C. Bainbridge states:

Fabergé was especially fortunate in going to Siam just at the time when there was a call not only for objects of fantasy but for much jewelry and not only for the Royal House but for the Siamese aristocracy. A craftsman of the type of Fabergé was lucky too in being called to a country which dedicated each year to a different animal. One of the years in question was under the sign of the pig and for this Fabergé made a large number of medals on which this animal was represented in enamel.⁵⁷

An example of these medals, (Fig. 23) was presented on the occasion of Queen Sawabhapongse's 50th birthday. The year was 1913, and the medal had two pigs painted in enamel. Most of the medals presented bore only a single pig, but those who were born in the same year as the Queen received a medal with two pigs. The inscription on the medals reads "Don't forget to regard the pig".⁵⁸

These are but a few of the articles in the Thai Royal Collection, but they represent pieces that demonstrate Fabergé's interest in the art and culture of Siam. These pieces show how he assimilated Siamese artistic conventions and historical motifs into his work so as to create pieces with the traditional aesthetic meaning for an Asian culture but which also reflect his own special

and 1875. The following is a list of the names of the persons who were present at the meeting held on the 1st of January 1875, at the residence of Mr. J. H. Smith, in the city of New York.

In his book on "The History of the United States," Mr. J. H. Smith writes: "The history of the United States is a history of the struggle for freedom and independence. It is a history of the people who have fought for the right to be free and to live in peace and harmony with each other. It is a history of the people who have fought for the right to be free and to live in peace and harmony with each other. It is a history of the people who have fought for the right to be free and to live in peace and harmony with each other."

The people of the United States have fought for the right to be free and to live in peace and harmony with each other. They have fought for the right to be free and to live in peace and harmony with each other. They have fought for the right to be free and to live in peace and harmony with each other. They have fought for the right to be free and to live in peace and harmony with each other. They have fought for the right to be free and to live in peace and harmony with each other.

There are two ways of looking at the history of the United States. One way is to look at it as a history of the struggle for freedom and independence. The other way is to look at it as a history of the struggle for the right to be free and to live in peace and harmony with each other. Both ways are correct, and both are necessary to a full understanding of the history of the United States.



Fig. 22. Fabergé Nephrite Urn-Shaped Vase





Fig. 23. Fabergé "Year of the Pig" Medal



"refinements" and elements of the international idiom of his own time.



CHAPTER IV

FABERGÉ'S JAPANESE AESTHETIC INSPIRATION

Netsuke

Carl Fabergé was fascinated by the Japanese art of netsuke carving. These are small, richly carved toggles used to suspend articles such as pouches or cases from the traditional obi or sash around a Kimono. Fabergé had over 500 examples of Netsuke in his personal collection that was displayed in a show-case in his apartment (Fig. 24).⁵⁹ Carl Fabergé may have purchased these pieces from a shop on Nevsky Prospect called "Japan" which specialized in Japanese art.⁶⁰ The influence of Japanese netsuke on Fabergé's small stone carvings of animals is readily apparent.

To the Japanese, netsukes are an encyclopedic catalog of customs, legends, symbols and ritual. These small carvings often represent stories that have been passed down through years of Japanese mythology. To the observant western eye of Carl Fabergé the fascination of netsuke was in the carving. The fantastic detail work used by netsuke carvers to create these small fantasies enchanted and inspired Fabergé.

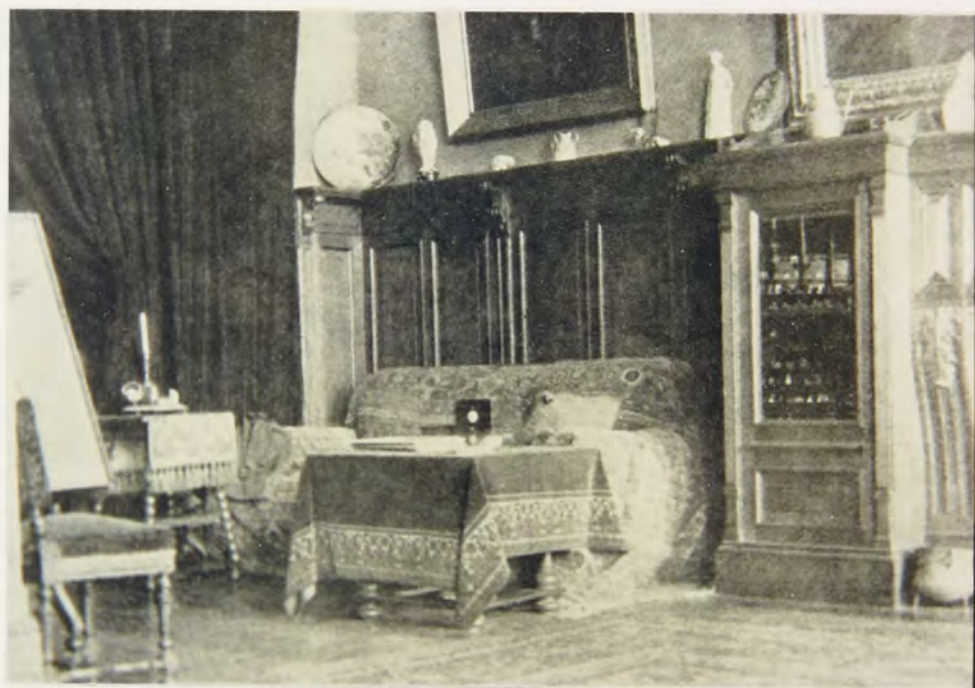


Fig. 24. Fabergé's Apartment in Morskaya Street Building



Living creatures, such as birds, monkeys, fish, rabbits, dogs, and human beings were a favorite subject of netsuke carvers. Several of Fabergé's small stone carvings of animals are directly inspired by netsuke carvings. A fine example is a Fukura Suzume, a formalized sparrow (Fig. 25), by the Japanese carver Masatomo, done in the late 18th century. Masatomo was of the Kyoto school of artists, his sparrow is shown with tiny wings spread out and its tail erect, the body smooth with no sign of feathers. The large eyes are inlaid and the mouth is broad.⁶¹

Another example of a Fukura Suzume (Fig. 26) is by one of the greatest netsuke artists Masanao from Kyoto who worked before 1781. Again the same stylized sparrow form appears with the small round smooth body, tiny wings spread and tail erect, and its enlarged eyes looking straight ahead. Both of these examples from the Kyoto school also have a powerful distended chest, a feature Masanao used often in depicting his creatures.⁶²

The influence of the Fukura Suzume, or stylized sparrow of the Kyoto school, can be seen in three sparrows (Fig. 27) carved from hardstones by Fabergé for Her Majesty Queen Alexandra. The netsuke influence is easily seen in the small, round, smooth body with the tiny spread wings. Two have the erect tail and broad mouth. The eyes are inlaid with precious stones, and

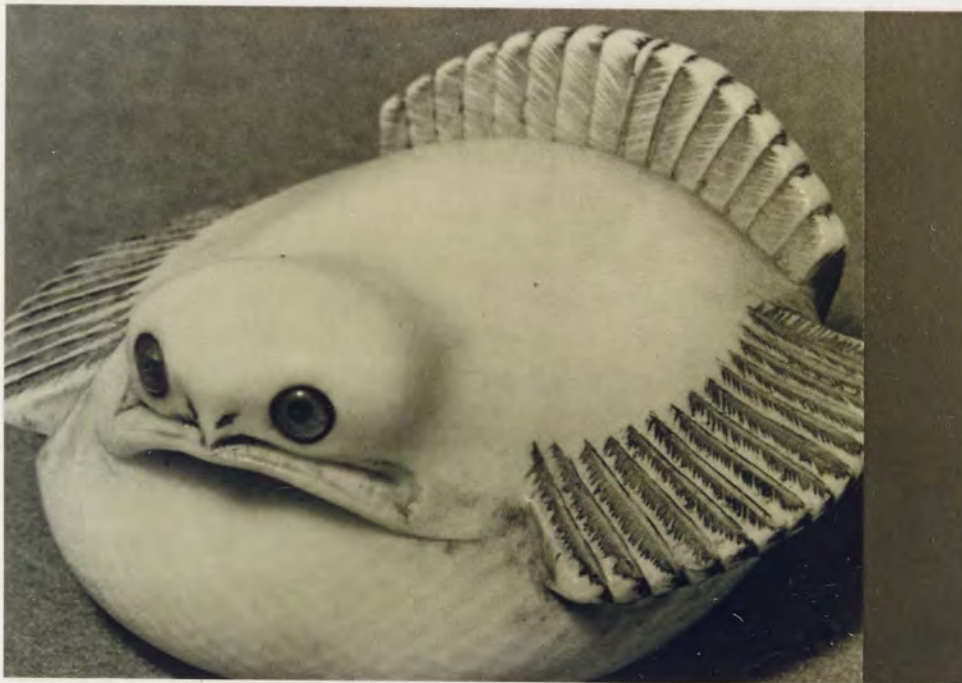


Fig. 25. Masatomo Ivory Fukura Suzume



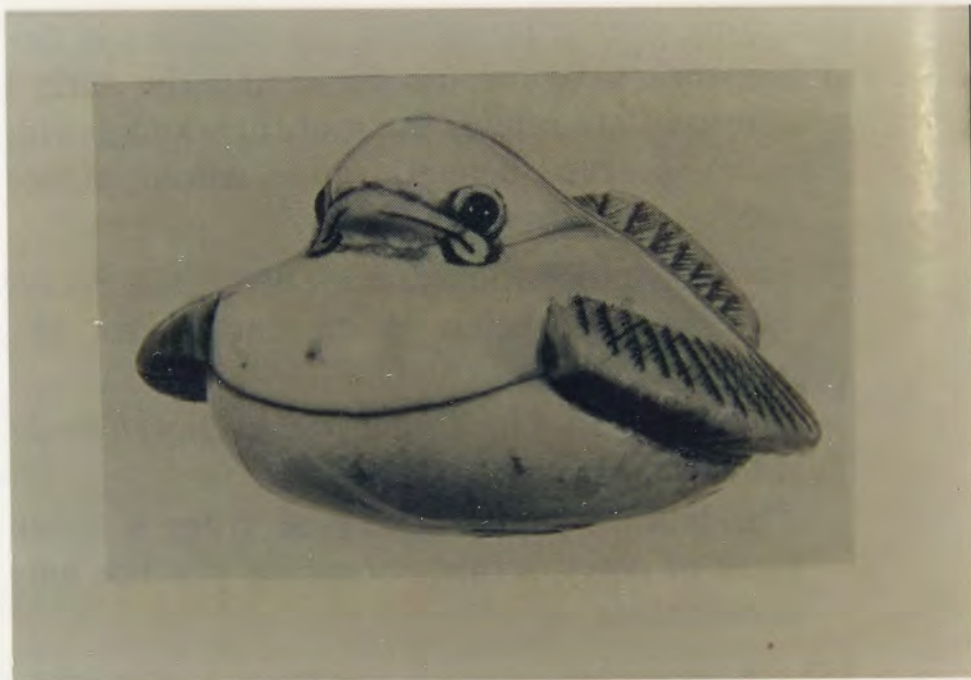


Fig. 26. Masanao Ivory Fukura Suzume

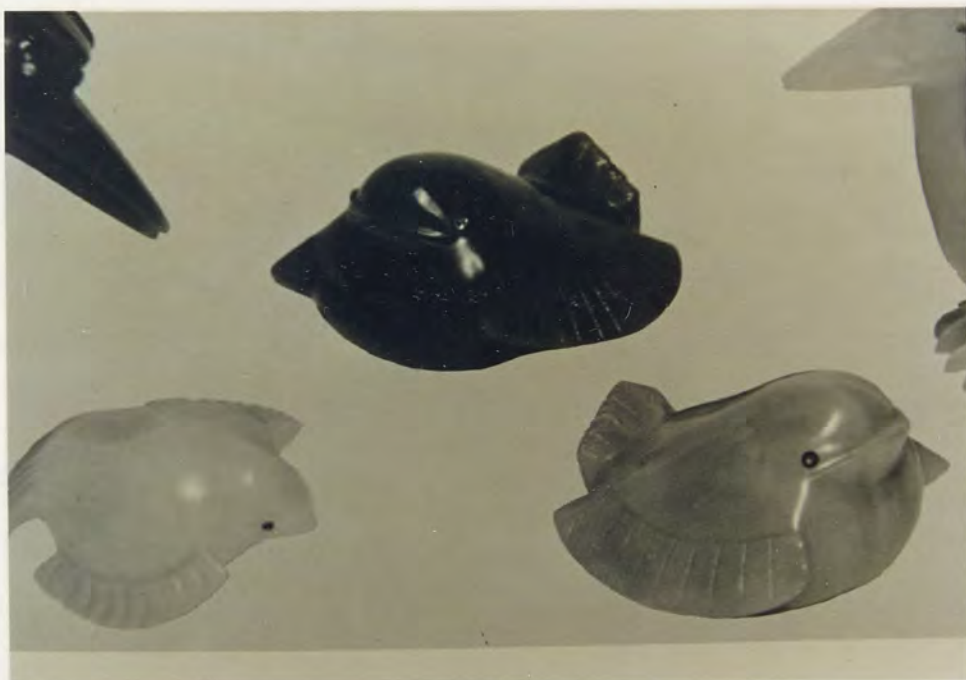


Fig. 27. Fabergé Hardstone Sparrows



they look straight ahead. This is not a typical Western representation of a sparrow. The inspiration is purely Japanese.

Matsuda Sukenaga, an early 19th century carver invented the technique known as "ittobori", that is, single knife-stroke carving. The result is a figure marked by broad angular planes. The strokes are clearly visible and an eighth of an inch or more in width.⁶³

Examples of ittobori carving are a stylized crane made by Sukenaga (Fig. 28) and a mandarin duck (Fig. 29) carved by the 19th century artist Mitsuhiro. Both of these pieces show the sharp angular lines that are a result of ittobori style carving. Looking at a nephrite kingfisher by Fabergé (Fig. 30), one can see that this Fabergé work was definitely a reflection of the ittobori style of netsuke. The sharp angular lines are there and the bold wide strokes are deliberate. The closed, compact style of the kingfisher also echoes the netsuke influence.

A very rare piece by an artist named Seiko, who was affiliated with the Minku school of the late 18th century, shows two puppies one a straw cloak (Fig. 31).⁶⁴ They are curled up close to one another, and the straw is carved in detail to give texture to the cloak. The puppies' bodies are smooth and the fine hair is delicately articulated.



Fig. 28. Sukenaga Ittobori Crane



Fig. 29. Mitauhieo Ittobori Duck





Fig. 30. Fabergé Nephrite Kingfisher





Fig. 31. Seiko Two Puppies on a Straw Cloak



Fig. 32. Fabergé Puppies on a Mat



A similar group of puppies, asleep on a mat, is seen in a piece by Fabergé (Fig. 32). They are curled up in the same fashion on a heavily textured mat. Fabergé has carved the puppies with great naturalism, and even the hair on the puppies, like that on Seiko's, is defined. Fabergé cleverly choose stones that would suggest the natural qualities of the subjects: varicolored agate and chalcedony are used to render the multicolored puppies and brown marble, the mat.

The snail, a favorite subject of the netsuke carver, is rendered by Fabergé with a high polish (Fig. 33) in order to simulate the slimy quality of this creature. Another snail (Fig. 34), carved of lavender jade, is used as a handle on an ikebana knife with a nephrite blade. Both of these snails deviate from traditional netsuke snails in that they are rendered outside their shells, whereas most netsuke snails hide within their shells.

The three mystic monkeys who see no evil, hear no evil, and speak no evil, are found at Nikko and in various wayside shrines in Japan. These three monkeys are compressed into one monkey by the netsuke carver Kwaigyokusai Masatsugu (1813-1893) (Fig. 35). This ivory monkey covers his eyes with one paw, his mouth with the other, and covers his ears with his feet.

Fabergé has created two such monkeys out of obsidian (Fig. 36). These two hardstone carvings emulate the

A series of papers on the subject of the "New Japan" is now
 in the hands of the public. They are written in a
 clear and concise manner, and are well illustrated with
 maps and diagrams. The first paper, "The New Japan," is
 a general survey of the country, and the second, "The
 New Japan," is a more detailed account of the country.
 The third paper, "The New Japan," is a more detailed
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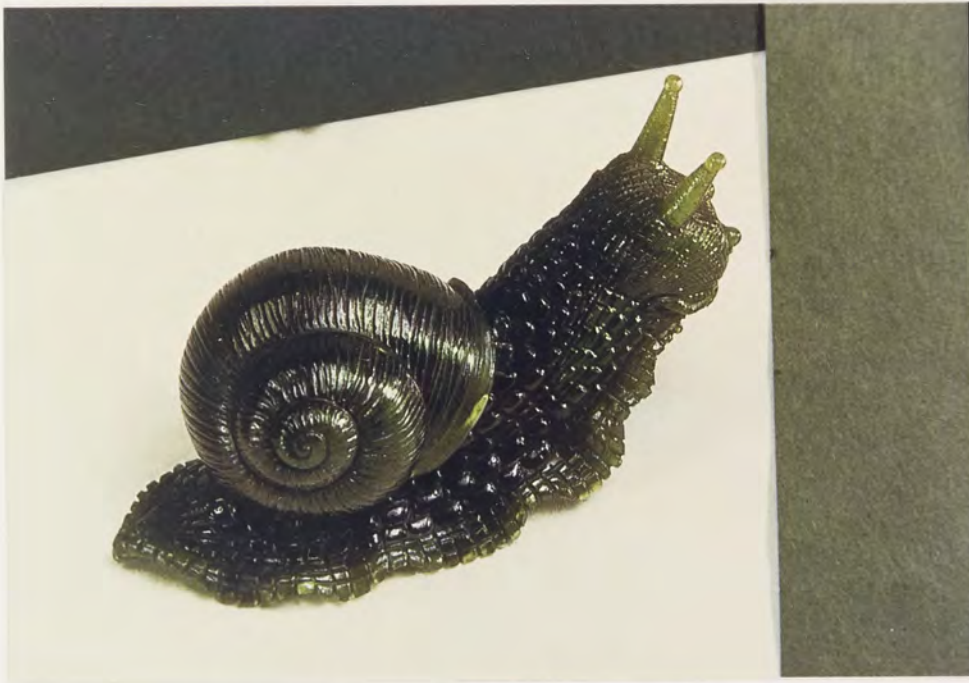


Fig. 33. Fabergé Jade Snail



Fig. 34. Fabergé Knife with Jade Snail



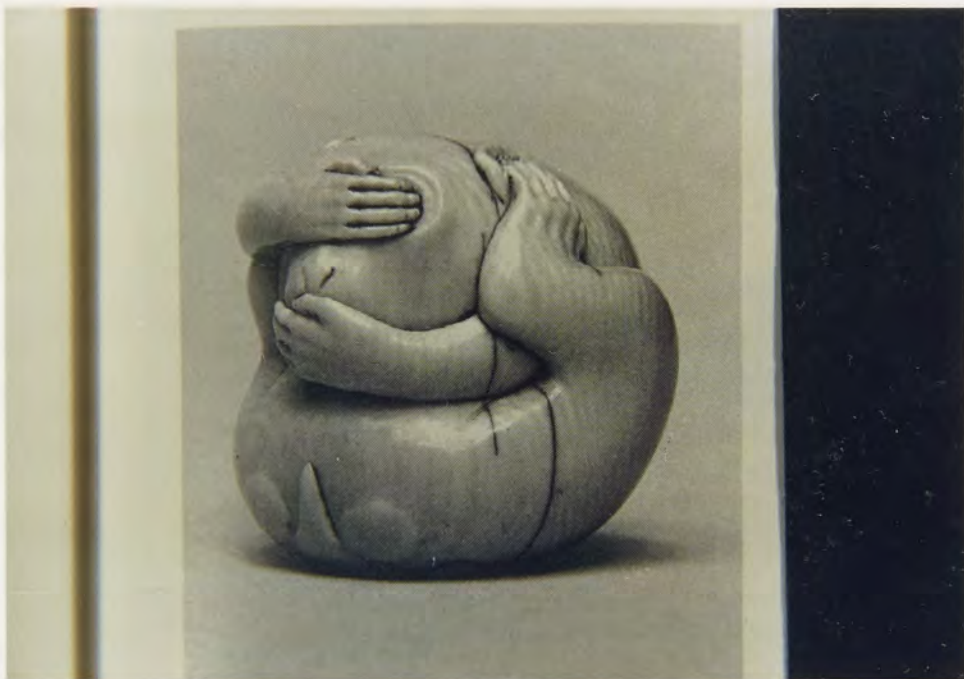


Fig. 35. Masatsuga Ivory Monkey



Fig. 36. Faberge Amazonite and Obsidian Monkeys



ivory netsuke down to the definition of the tail and haunches. Furthermore, the small round netsuke shape is still retained in these Fabergé pieces. There could not be a better example of the influence of Japanese netsuke carving in the work of Fabergé.

Of course these are the most obvious examples, the ones that emulate netsuke carving from period pieces. Fabergé's hardstone carvings developed a character of their own as time went on. Their amusing personalities became a Fabergé trade mark. Even though Fabergé grew away from the traditional style of netsuke carving, nearly all of his small hardstone characters and animals owe their beginnings to the inspiration of the netsuke carvers of Japan.

Bonsai and Ikebana

Bonsai and ikebana are Japanese art forms that go back for centuries. Bonsai is the art of planting and raising miniature trees in pots or trays. The word Bonsai means "planted in a tray."⁶⁵ Ikebana is the art of arranging cut flowers in rhythmic, decorative designs. Both of these art forms inspired Fabergé to explore different ways of representing his floral arrangements. Using asymmetrical balance, and Japanese style containers Fabergé was able to add an oriental flair to some of the flowers in his garden repertoire.

Fabergé not only had a background in historical styles of art but he also had direct contact with the imperial collections. Japanese and Chinese floral pieces from the later Ch'ing Dynasty and Edo period were sent as gifts to, or collected as curiosities by, the imperial family.⁶⁶

Fabergé created a beautiful bonsai tree in mat gold planted with a tulip of opaque white enamel with nephrite leaves (Fig. 37). This bonsai tree is rendered with the finest attention to detail. Fabergé has left the knots in the trunk where limbs have been carefully pruned off by the gardener. The slanting shape of the trunk called "Shakan," a favorite of the bonsai grower, adds to the asymmetrical balance of the piece.⁶⁷ The bark is naturally rendered, knots and pine needles are carefully placed to make the tree look as real as possible. The role of the foliage of a bonsai tree is to reveal and complement the trunk and branch structures of the tree; and this is most certainly accomplished in this piece.⁶⁸

The vessel Fabergé used here is called, in Japanese, "Fukuroshiki-bachi," or a vessel with a lip projecting inwards.⁶⁹ This vessel is also made to the proper bonsai mathematical proportions, that is, the length should be two thirds the tree's height if emphasis is on the height of the tree.⁷⁰ This piece is 4 1/2 inches high.

Another pine tree in red gold (Fig. 38) is planted

...the only one in the world...
...the only one in the world...
...the only one in the world...
...the only one in the world...

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...the only one in the world...
...the only one in the world...



Fig. 37. Fabergé Japanese Bonsai Tree in Gold





Fig. 38. Fabergé Bonsai Pine in Hardstone Vessel



in a carved bowenite vase that is supported on a Japanese style table of aventurine quartz. This particular piece was copied from nature at Sandringham, the Queen's summer home in Norfolk, England. Here Fabergé has used the natural growth patterns of his tree to create a commonly used bonsai typed called "Kengai," or cascade.⁷¹ The cascade spills out over the container like a waterfall. The apex is usually a large branch growing upward out of the back of the trunk just before the cascade turns downwards (Figs. 39 and 40).

Both of these Fabergé pieces (Figs. 37 and 38), reveal Fabergé's interest in the Japanese art of bonsai. The attention to detail that the Japanese have in creating their miniature trees captivated the imagination of this Russian jeweler to whom detail meant everything.

This eye for detail and simplicity of design is also evident in the Japanese art of flower arranging called ikebana. Balance and symbolism each play a part in ikebana as well.

The love of nature in Japan amounts almost to a religion. The indigenous religion, Shinto, was based on the deification of natural objects and phenomena. Shinto has changed with the influence of imported faiths, but it still contains a strong element of nature worship. Shinto deities are often nebulous spirits residing in a particular mountain, tree or rock. It is this strong



Fig. 39. Cascade Bonsai





Fig. 40. Cascade Bonsai



bond with nature and their surroundings that creates a desire to have a piece of nature near them. It is rare to find a Japanese home that does not have some sort of floral arrangement in it at all times.

Shozo Sato, in his book The Art of Arranging Flowers, states the following.

... it is important to understand that in principle the Ikebana arrangement aims not at bringing a finite piece of nature into the house, but at suggesting the whole of nature and at creating a link between indoors and outdoors. One consequence is that the arranger is likely to use several different types of plants in a single arrangement, and to give prominence not only to blossoms, but to leaves and flowerless branches as well. Even when a single type of flower is used, an attempt is made to bring out its full implications as a symbol of nature..⁷²

Fabergé took this idea a bit further. He created not only an arrangement that would represent nature, but one that would not fade away with time. Parker Lesley in his catalog of the Lillian Thomas Pratt Collection states this quite eloquently.

To cultivate a garden in which the shift of the seasons played no part, where no winter could freeze the roots and no summer's drought could scorch the blossoms; to fashion golden stems and leaves of veined nephrite, petals of chalcedony, enamel, agate, and amethyst, with stamens of gold set with sapphires and topaz, imperishable in their vases of rock crystal or pots of bloodstone with golden soil this was Fabergé's gift to the frostbitten land of Russia. Of all his fancies, the flowers are the dantiest, the most felicitous, an the most universal..⁷³

These Fabergé flower arrangements were a source of joy throughout the long winters, not only in Russia, but also in courts and stately homes all over Europe and Scandinavia. Of gold, enamel, and gem stones, they have a flavor that is uniquely Fabergé in execution. The refined use of enamel, nephrite, and different colors of gold to simulate the natural organic material of a plant is a trademark of the House of Fabergé. Even though Fabergé created his own version of the floral arrangement, the Japanese influence and inspiration is very evident.

A typical scene from a setting for a tea ceremony (Fig. 41), shows the presence of a simple container called a *ichiju-giri*, a one-window container of bamboo (Fig. 42) to hold a single branch of camellias.⁷⁴ This shows the simple Chabana (tea flowers) style of arrangement that is associated with the tea ceremony. Both the tea ceremony and Zen Buddhism came to Japan from China and they emphasize simplicity and austerity.⁷⁵ This simplicity can be seen in the *ichiju-giri* container used for the flower. Fabergé has used this same motif for a spray of Japonica (Fig. 43). He has used the *ichiju-giri* one window bamboo container carved of browenite to hold the flower spray. The container rests on a scholar's table of white serpentine. The simplicity of the Chabana style is



Fig. 41. Ichiju-giri Bamboo Container with Camellia





Fig. 42. Ichiju-giri One-window Container





Fig. 43. Fabergé Japonica Emerging from an Ichiju-giri Container



used by Fabergé to give this piece its Japanese flavor. The Japonica is symbolic of a "noble spirit."⁷⁶ The blossoms are enamelled in a pale pink and the leaves are made of nephrite and the stigma of each bloom is a single rose diamond. Once again Fabergé has used the cascade to achieve the asymmetrical balance so typical in Japanese art.

Another Fabergé piece (Fig. 44) has a wild white rose, the Japanese symbol for love and respect.⁷⁷ The rose is arranged in a simple pale jade cylindrical container and rests on a Japanese style table. Here Fabergé has used the bonsai chokkan, or formal upright, style.⁷⁸ The stalk of the rose grows straight up, perpendicular to the table, and small branches of leaves and flowers spring from it.

In an early Edo period (1615-1868) wood-block print (Fig. 45), a samurai and his entourage are seen admiring a flower arrangement. If one compares this flower arrangement and one made by Fabergé (Fig. 46), many similarities are apparent.

First of all the large, flared mouthed vessels are very similar in shape, and they both rest on low simple Japanese style tables. The vase in the Edo print is filled with water, and the Fabergé vase has a copper inner container that is filled with rock crystal "water." In both cases a variety of plants, both pine



Fig. 44. Fabergé Wild White Rose on a Japanese Table





Fig. 45. Early Edo Period Wood-block Print





Fig. 46. Fabergé Pine and Lilly Arrangement in Gold and Nephrite



and floral, are used to create a miniature garden. The pine tree in Japan is symbolic of happiness, long life and endurance because it remains green year round and lives quite long. Fabergé has used the lily (the symbol of purity) in his miniature garden.⁷⁹

The Japanese arts of Netsuke, Bonsai and Ikebana all had an influence on the art of Carl Fabergé. Their inspiration is readily seen in many of his works. Although he went on to create his own style hardstone carvings and small flower arrangements that are purely Fabergé, Japanese art was a major source of inspiration for him.

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time taken to learn to speak is dependent on the
child's natural capacity. It is not possible to say
that a child is "slow" or "fast" in learning to
speak. It is only possible to say that a child is
learning to speak at a certain rate. The rate of
learning to speak is not the same for all children.
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learning to speak is not the same for all children.

CHAPTER V

A TASTE OF CHINA AND PERSIA

China

Carl Fabergé not only was inspired by oriental art, but he also used actual jade or porcelain pieces from the orient to form the basis of some of his works. Irrelevant decoration was never used because it could detract from the inherent beauty of the piece. Decoration was used only if it would enhance or compliment the piece.

An example of Fabergé's combination of actual oriental work and his own is an antique Chinese craved box in mutton-fat jade (Fig. 47). Fabergé has converted it into a powder compact with a red gold bezel decorated with translucent emerald green leaves and opalescent beads.

Another example is his intricately-carved silver-gilt stands for a peacock blue Ch'ien Lung bowl and dish, (Figs. 48 and 49). Kenneth Snowman in his book The Art of Carl Fabergé says these pieces illustrate "very clearly that side of his [Fabergé] character invariably emphasized by anyone who had personal contact

CHAPTER V

A TASTE OF CHINESE AND JAPANESE

CHINA

Early foreign and only now imported by agents, and
but he also used several years to purchase books and
others to form the basis of some of his books.
Extensive discussion was never made because it was
difficult from the inherent beauty of the work.
Discussion was good only if it was a review of
something new.

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Fig. 47. Antique Chinese Carved Jade Box





Fig. 48. Chinese Ch'ien Lung Porcelain Bowl



Fig. 49. Chinese Ch'ien Lung Porcelain Dish



with him; it was a case of the original oriental porcelain first, and his own contribution very much second."⁸⁰

Sophisticated elegance is manifested in the simplicity of a small smokey quartz box found in the Museum of Applied Science and Technology, Sydney, New South Wales (Fig. 50).⁸¹ Fabergé has engraved the cover with a beautiful chinoiserie design that echoes the art of 18th century cabinet makers. The box is only 2 1/2 inches square, yet it is just as sophisticated, if not more so, than any of the larger items sold at the House of Fabergé. The refinement of the Chinese style in this piece shows how versatile Fabergé was in design.

Three scent flacons in nephrite, aventurine and bowenite (Fig. 51) are carved in the style of Chinese masks mounted with yellow gold, diamonds and cabochon rubies. These scent flacons are reminiscent of Chinese snuff bottles that were carved of nephrite, aquamarine and other semi-precious stones since the middle of the 17th century.

Persia

Fabergé created a few unique pieces using Persian art brought to him by clients, and in a few pieces he incorporated Persian and Arabic calligraphy.

A client by the name of Othmar Neuscheller brought a



Fig. 50. Fabergé Smokey Quartz Box with Chinoiserie Design



Fig. 51. Fabergé Hardstone Scent Flacons in Chinese Mask Motifs



Persian knife handle carved of lapis-lazuli to Fabergé and requested that it be made into a letter-opener.⁸² Fabergé created a beautiful ivory blade for the knife (Fig. 52), and attached it to the handle with a graceful gold mount. The gold mount is in a ribbed palm fan design to pick up the palm design carved in the original handle. Once again Fabergé's addition to the original artwork is not overpowering. The simple blade and elegant gold mount harmonize with, and compliment, the original Persian carved handle.

Fabergé head workmaster Erik Kollin, who specialized in reproducing historic pieces, created a gold buckle set with two large antique turquoises with engraved gold figures of a lady and a gentleman with another small turquoise for the catch (Fig. 53). The piece is simple and emphasizes the beauty of the antique Persian engravings; it does not subvert or overwhelm them.

Another piece of Erik Kollin's is a Persian swivel seal (Fig. 54). The stone is a Sassanian intaglio seal engraved with two stags. The Sassanian rulers were the last native rulers of Persia; their dynasty lasted from about 226 A.D. to around 641 A.D..⁸³ Kollin added a silver shank with rings on the shoulder which was an authentic imitation of the Old Persian style of 400-500 A.D..⁸⁴ The seal is made of bonded brown agate.

Fabergé also used Persian and Arabic calligraphy on

Between 1912 and 1914, the number of cases of diphtheria in the United States was 10,000. This was a very high number for that time, and it was due to the fact that the disease was very contagious. The disease was caused by a bacterium called *Corynebacterium diphtheriae*. The bacterium was found in the throat of the patient, and it was spread to other people by droplets of saliva or mucus. The disease was very dangerous, and it often led to death. The number of cases was reduced by the use of antitoxin, which was developed by Dr. Emil Adolf von Behring. The antitoxin was made from the serum of horses that had been infected with the bacterium. The antitoxin was used to treat the patient, and it was found to be very effective. The number of cases was reduced to about 1,000 in 1915, and it continued to decline in the following years.

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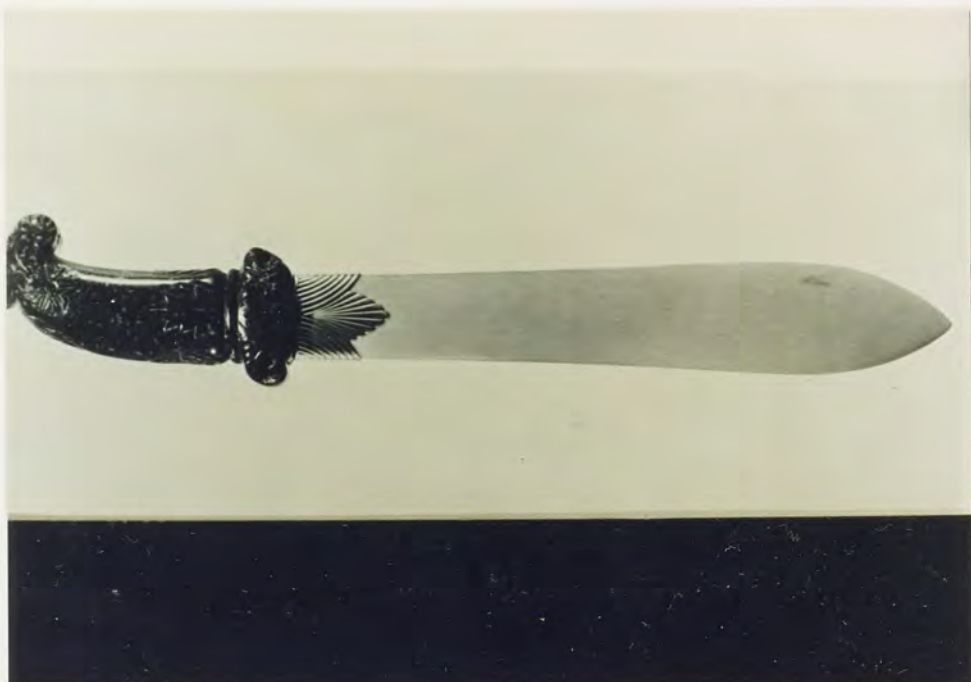


Fig. 52. Fabergé Letter-opener with Persian Lapis-lazuli Handle



Fig. 53. Fabergé Buckle with Engraved Antique Persian Handle





Fig. 54. Fabergé Sassanian Swivel Seal

some items. A cigarette case of gold (Fig. 55), obviously made for a wealthy client, has a Persian saying enamelled in green and red. The saying is, "In this world there is suffering, and if one doesn't feel it, then he is not a human being."⁸⁵ This must have been written to keep the wealthy ruling class humble. The calligraphy is gracefully done, and the case is executed in a very simple style to harmonize with the solemn words of wisdom.

One last piece showing Fabergé's interest in the Near East is a letter-opener (Fig. 56). The blade is made of a gun-metal with gold inlaid scrolls, and the handle is of gold with inlaid enamel and a large piece of turquoise. The lettering on the handle in Arabic reads "Victory through Allah."⁸⁶ The cigarette case and this letter-opener show not only that Fabergé had clients in the Near East as well as Europe and Asia but also that he understood the Near Eastern aesthetic and its traditions as well.



Fig. 55. Fabergé Cigarette Case with Persian Calligraphy

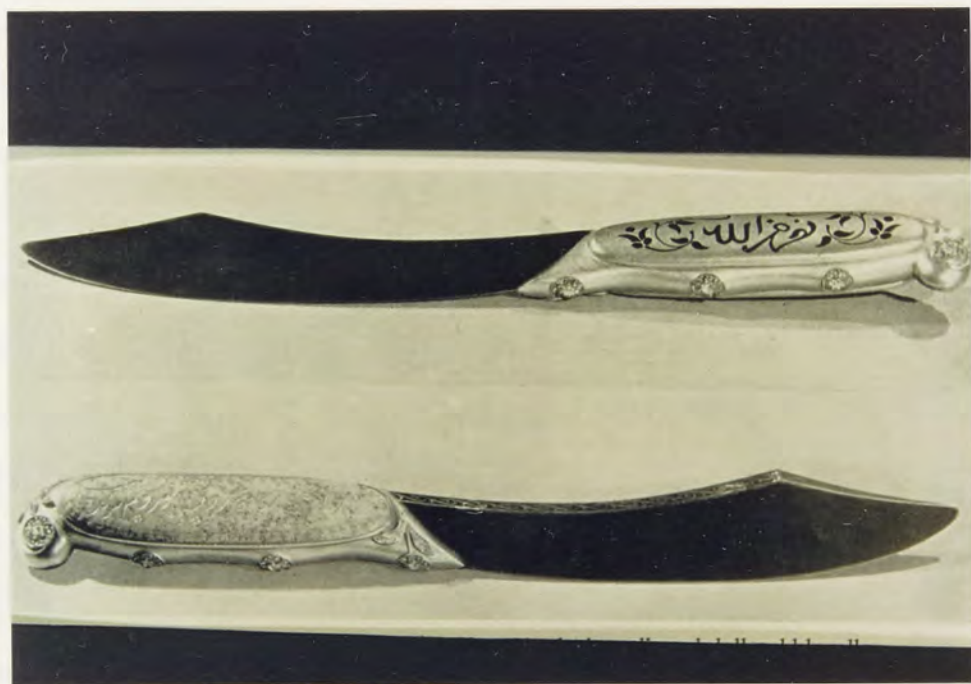


Fig. 56. Fabergé Letter-opener with Arabic Calligraphy



CHAPTER VI

CONCLUSION

Thus, the artistic vision of Carl Fabergé extends beyond his chef-d'oeuvres, the Imperial Easter Eggs for which he is most famous. He created the "objet de fantasie" for a society that was anxious for something new, something other than the heavy Victorian jewelry that dominated the 19th century. Fabergé supplied the unusual. And the high quality of his work and attention to detail became a Fabergé trade mark. Subtlety and refinement of design replaced the bold and clumsy concoctions of the Victorian era, thus the age of Fabergé was born.

The cosmopolitan clientele of Fabergé always demanded new items. Hence the creation process of new designs never stopped. To fuel this process Carl Fabergé used designs from many stylistic periods of European history, from the Gothic to Art Nouveau. The art of the Orient also played a part in the inspiration of designs by Carl Fabergé. It is this oriental influence that caused Fabergé to create some of his most unusual pieces.

Fabergé used traditional stylistic motifs of Siam to create pieces with aesthetic meaning for an Asian

culture. In the memorial brooches of the children of King Chulalongkorn, Fabergé used the dynastic symbols of the Chakra and Kri as well as the Siamese flame motif. He employed Hindu and Buddhist iconography for religious and ceremonial pieces created for the King's use. Fabergé studied the architectural detail of the Siamese Buddhist monument, the Chedi, to create a reliquary for the King. He also used specific motifs from the Chiengsen and Sukodaya periods to create images of Buddha that would have religious as well as artistic meaning. Fabergé assimilated these Siamese artistic conventions and historical/religious motifs into his work so that it would have integrity.

Fabergé's fascination with the art of the Netsuke is evident in his private collection of over 500 pieces. The correlation between specific netsuke types such as the Fukura Suzume, by Masatomo, and the Fabergé sparrows made for the Queen of England, shows the strong influence of this Japanese art on the work of Fabergé. His use of the ittobori style of carving developed by Matsuda Sukenaga in Japan also attests to the fact that netsuke carvings played a large role in the development of Fabergé's hard-stone carving.

Fabergé's small potted trees and floral arrangements in gold and enamel reflect the inspiration of the Japanese arts of Bonsai and Ikebana. His use of

asymmetrical balance, the cascade or "Kengai" type tree and his choice of vessels to plant his miniature gardens in, are all results of his interest in the Japanese culture. Fabergé's small spray of Jaonica flowing out of a ichiju-giri one window bamboo container carved of brounite is a perfect example of the Japanese influence in Fabergé's small floral arrangements.

Fabergé's use of oriental motifs also includes the incorporation of Chinese porcelains and antique Persian carvings in turquoise and lapis lazuli into his work. The decoration added by Fabergé would never detract from the inherent beauty of the piece. Fabergé would only add decoration that would complement the original piece. Sylistic motifs were maintained to continue the theme of the original design, this maintained the integrity of the piece, which was very important to Carl Fabergé.

Oriental motifs in the work of Carl Fabergé show his interest in the world outside his own. Carl Fabergé reached beyond the art of the Western world to receive inspiration from a culture much different from his own. He brought the art of the Orient to the West in the form of "objets de fantasie", an art form that captured the heart and mind of turn of the century Europe. At the same time, for his oriental clients, he brought their own art forms up to contemporary standards of highest craftsmanship and truly internationalized taste.

NOTES



NOTES

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ABSTRACT



ABSTRACT

The artistic vision of Carl Fabergé extends beyond his chef-d'oeuvre, the Imperial Easter Egg. His interest in the art of the orient, and its influence on his work is the main focus of this thesis.

With the publication of a complete catalogue of the Royal Fabergé collection in Thailand in 1985 a new light was shed on the work of Carl Fabergé. Many unusual and exotic pieces rarely seen before were photographed and published in one complete work. This provided a chance to see how Fabergé used traditional Siamese artistic motifs to create religious and secular pieces for the King of Siam at the turn of the century. This paper examines and presents a few of these pieces which directly use Siamese traditional artistic motifs.

The Japanese arts of Netsuke, Ikebana and Bonsai inspired Carl Fabergé to create small hard-stone carvings and miniature floral arrangements. Direct correlation between certain Fabergé small hard-stone carvings and specific Japanese netsuke prototypes shows the direct influence of this Japanese art form on the work of Carl Fabergé. Bonsai trees in gold, and enamelled floral arrangements in nephrite vessels, are made by Fabergé in traditional Japanese style. These pieces are examined in

light of how they relate to the arts of Bonsai and Ikibana.

Fabergé's use of oriental motifs includes a few pieces that incorporate actual Chinese porcelains and antique Persian carvings in turquoise and lapis lazuli. This combination of artistic motifs creates unique pieces that have an oriental flair.

This thesis demonstrates the fact that Carl Fabergé was greatly influenced by the art of the Orient. His use of Buddhist and Hindu iconography, Japanese netsuke prototypes, and the incorporation of actual oriental porcelains in his work, shows his keen interest in and knowledge of oriental artistic motifs.

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admission.

It is a use of material which is not

known that suggests a new method of

expression. It is a new and original

form of expression of artistic and

other forms of material.

This change demonstrates the fact that

has been influenced by the art of the

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material, and the suggestion of which

material is in fact, and is not

knowledge of material artistic

